

7: Joest--62 [6]
116, 437, 562, 791, 888

E-5

(no date) 1882

Formosan Aborigines
Chin-hoan

There are no priests among the Chinwans, but some women hold the office of sooth-sayer. Old women seem to have a great deal of influence. I often saw them giving orders even to experienced warriors or swearing at them if they did not demand enough red flannel as payment for an object. During my entire stay with the Chinwans, however, they never stole anything from me, although I had to pay a high price for everything I bought from them.

7: Joest--62 [7]
116, 178, 787, 791

E-5

(no date) 1882

Formosan Aborigines
Chin-hoan

In former times soothsayers stayed in the public sleeping and assembly houses when they were consulted and wore no clothes. Today, however, they wear their holiday attire and all their ornaments and stay on a platform which usually consists of a few boards placed over a barrel. The women and girls of the village form a circle around her and join hands; they go around the platform, first slowly, and then faster and faster, and sing at the same time. The soothsayer begins to dance, slowly at first and gradually faster and more violently until she is attacked by a fit and falls off the platform. Then they catch her and carry her to the nearest hut where they try to make out, from her confused ravings, what the oracle signifies. This is often employed for less important occasions, to find out whether it will rain or whether it is time to cultivate the fields.

16: Müller--237 [2] U-3
116, 753, 791, 775, 787

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

The belief in the evil power of spirits is deeply rooted in native imagination. Sickness and other misfortunes are all believed to be the work of evil spirits. If one is careful, however, one may recognize the signs of his approach. The flight of birds or their call, even sneezing or gas in the stomach are thought to be signs of the presence of spirits. With the aid of soothsayers and dream specialists it is possible sometimes to escape their evil designs. Once they have taken hold of their victim, however, it is difficult to elude their grasp.

16: Müller--237 [3]
116, 755, 791

U-3

(no date) 1910

Formosan Aborigines

If a member of the household is taken seriously ill, the desire of the spirits must be learned first of all. In one tribe of the Ataiyal group it is customary to call a female soothsayer to the bedside of the sick man; there she consults the fates. She holds a small bamboo cane between her knees and balances a round stone on it. If she is able to keep it from falling from the cane by moving her right hand, the evil spirit will not be able to harm the sick man. If the stone falls off, however, the sick man's fate is sealed.

39; Wiedfeldt--16
116, 755, 776, 787, 791

F-3 ((1913) 1917

Formosan Aborigines
Atayal

Superstitions, fear of spirits, or similar things...are unknown to them. The old woman of the clan, the hamangoppu, tattoos, administers medicines in case of illness, and foretells whether the patient will recover, or whether the woman will have a child. She does this by dropping pieces of elder pith on a bamboo board which she holds on her knees and counting the number of pieces that fall. A raven that lights on a hut is considered an evil omen. This belief does not exist among the Chinese or Japanese. Their imagination has produced no other superstitions or spells.